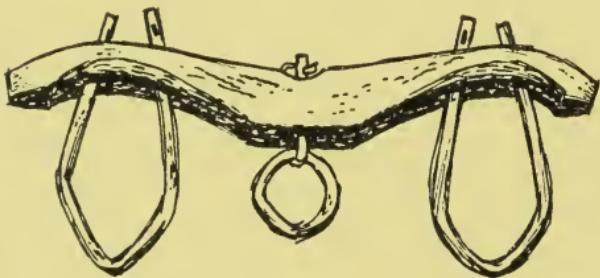


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History of the Lincoln  
homestead.

# LINCOLN ROOM



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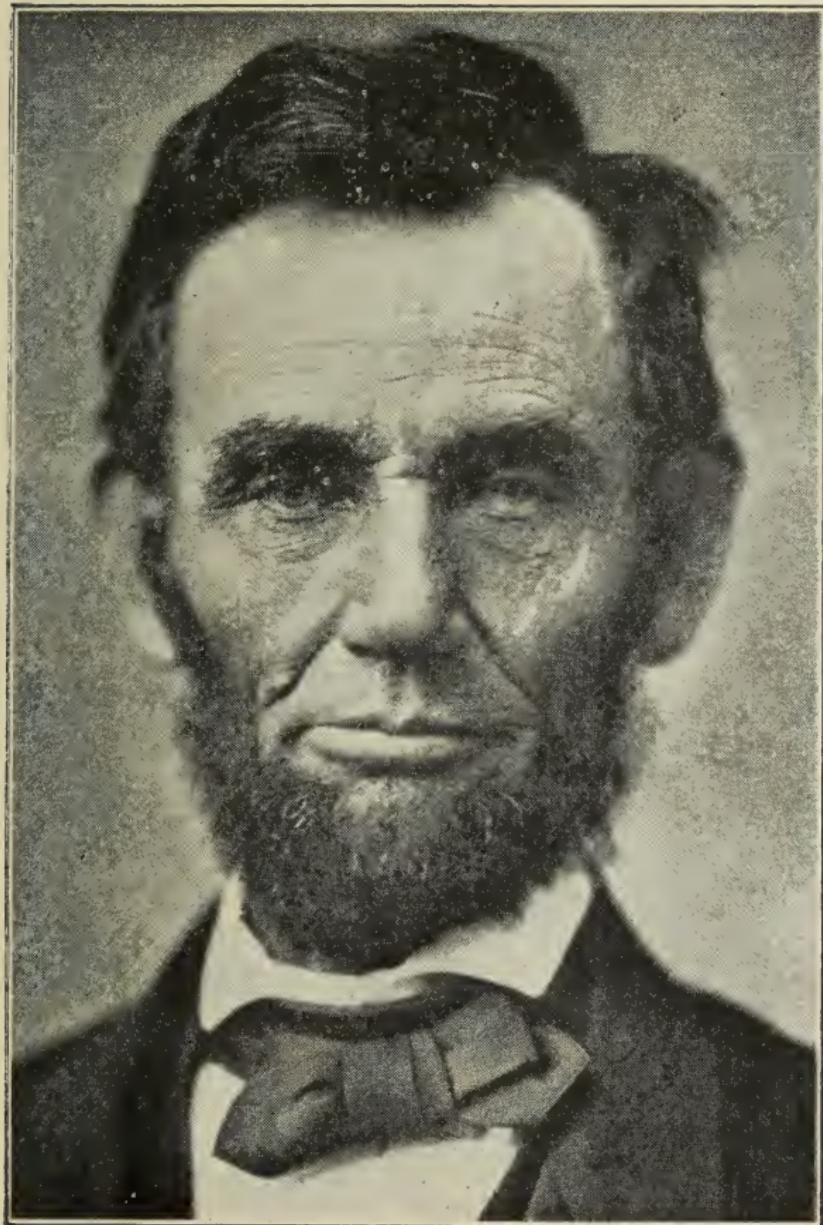
# HISTORY of the **LINCOLN HOMESTEAD**



Published By  
**FRANK DARNEILLE**

508 South Seventh St., Springfield, Illinois





ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
1809-1865

## ILLUSTRATIONS

There have been many photographs taken of the home since the invention of the camera. One of the earliest of these was taken August 8, 1860 and shows a procession of Lincoln "Railsplitter" supporters marching in front of the homestead. Mr. Lincoln stands in the doorway and watches the crowd. Another photograph of historical interest was taken on May 4, 1865, and shows a number of mourners gathered about the premises on the day of the funeral. The home was draped in black from the roof to the ground on all sides. Another interesting picture was taken several years after Robert Lincoln deeded the property to the people of Illinois. In the foreground stands the elm tree that Mr. Lincoln planted before leaving for Washington. The Lincoln family group is a reproduction of a painting made about 1861. It was loaned to the State Historical Society in 1921 by the Illinois State Register and is from the Fryer family collection. The interior views show Lincoln's Home much as it was when he and his family resided there. Since then many thousands of pictures have been taken by amateur and professional photographers.



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LINCOLN Room

# History of the Lincoln Homestead

By FRANK DARNEILLE

Of the numerous sites in Illinois that have become sacred because of their association with Abraham Lincoln, none is more important in the affections of the nation than the beautiful homestead that stands on the north-east corner of Eighth and Jackson streets in Springfield.

Abraham Lincoln lived within the walls of this historic structure for almost sixteen years and it is the only place of residence he ever owned. It was the one possession that spelled security for him and shelter for his loved ones. It was a place of refuge where he could relax and reflect upon the perplexing problems of life. It was Home Sweet Home to Abraham Lincoln.

There is no chapter in the life of Abraham Lincoln more beautiful than that which relates to his homestead. Everyone knows he was a family man and was devoted to Mary and the children. A number of intimate sketches of their life together have been written and the details establish the fact that the homestead was a haven of happiness for them.

Abraham Lincoln arrived in Springfield upon the 15th day of April in the year 1837 to make his permanent home. He put an advertisement in the Sangamo Journal announcing the formation of a partnership with John T. Stuart for the practice of law. He made friends from the start and prospered.

Two years later he was among the guests attending a social affair at the home of Ninian W. Edwards, and when introduced to Mary Todd remarked, "I want to dance with you the worst way." Those simple words made them partners and so began the romance that culminated in their marriage three years later.

Tradition informs us that upon the morning of November 4th, 1842, Abraham Lincoln called at the home of Rev. Charles Dresser and confided in him that Mary Todd and he were to be married that evening and wished to engage him to say the wedding rites. That evening at the home of Ninian W. Edwards and in the presence of about forty guests Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd were united in the holy bonds of matrimony. The ceremony performed by Rev. Dresser was simple and impressive. A bountiful old-time supper was served in honor of the newlyweds and about eleven o'clock they departed.

Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln spent their honeymoon at the Globe Tavern. At that time it was considered the leading hostelry in Springfield. Their room and board cost them four dollars a week. On August 1, 1843, their first child Robert Todd Lincoln was born. Several months later they rented a little house on

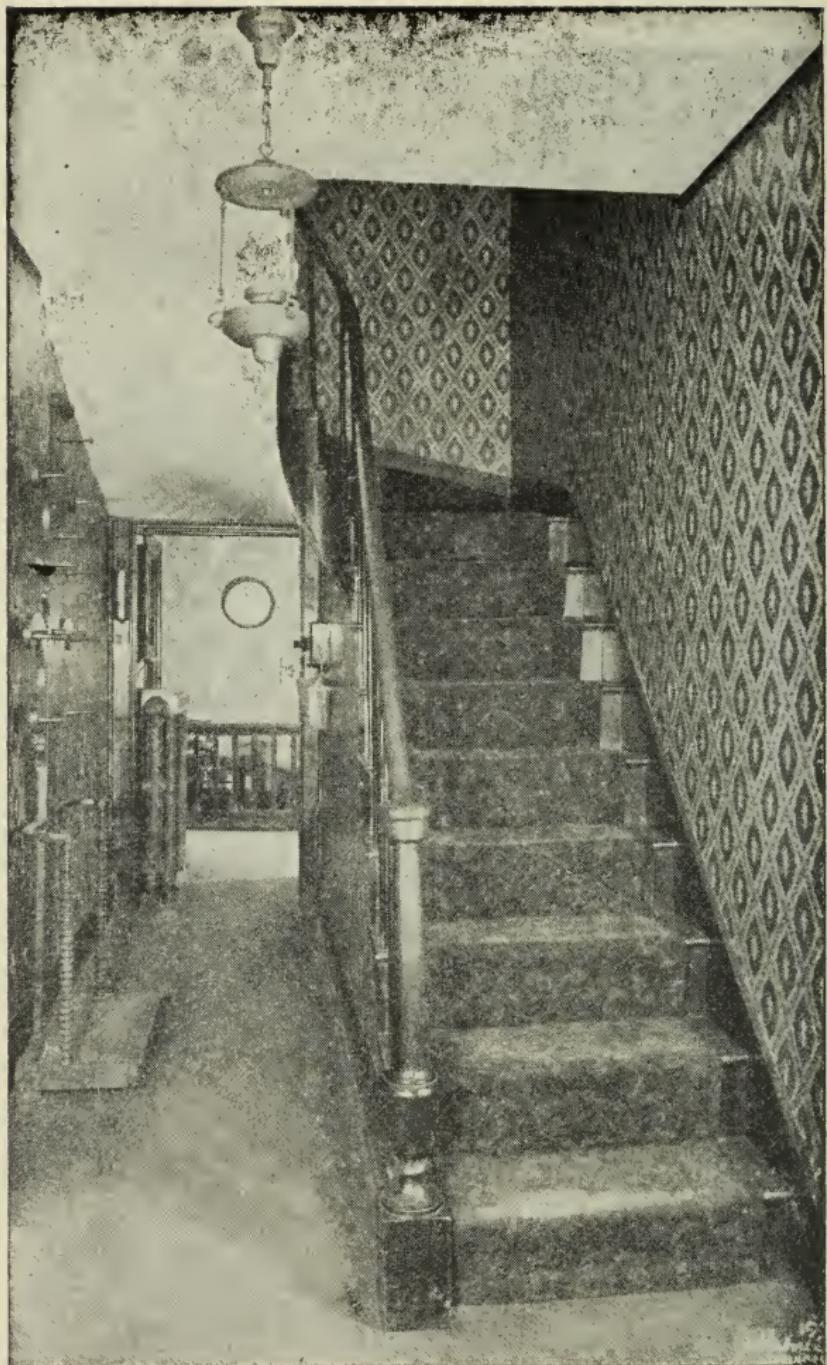
Fourth street and started housekeeping. During the latter part of the year they began looking for a house of their own.

It was on January 7th, 1844, that Abraham Lincoln persuaded Rev. Charles Dresser to sell him the beautiful little cottage he owned and they entered into a contract for the transfer of the homestead. Rev. Dresser agreed to convey the property to Lincoln on or before April 1, 1844, while Lincoln agreed to pay Dresser \$1,200.00 in cash and to convey a lot in the business district he and his partner, Stephen T. Logan, had acquired.

On February 5, 1844, Lincoln made a payment of \$750.00 under the contract, the sum to draw 12 per cent interest until Dresser fulfilled the contract. On April 23, 1844, Lincoln and Logan with their wives joining in the deed conveyed the business site to Dresser, the consideration being \$300.00. On May 2, 1844, Dresser and his wife deeded the homestead to Lincoln for \$1,500.00.

When Rev. Dresser deeded the homestead to Lincoln there was a mortgage against it amounting to \$900.00. This mortgage was made on February 15, 1843, to Ebenezer H. Sawyer of Connecticut. On August 30, 1844, Robert Irwin with power of attorney from Sawyer satisfied the mortgage on the margin of the record in the court house.

The Lincolns moved into their new home on May 2, 1844. In it three of their children were born and from it one of them was buried. Edward Baker Lincoln, the second son, was born March 10, 1846, and died there February



STAIRCASE AND HALL

—Photo copyright, Herbert Georg Studio

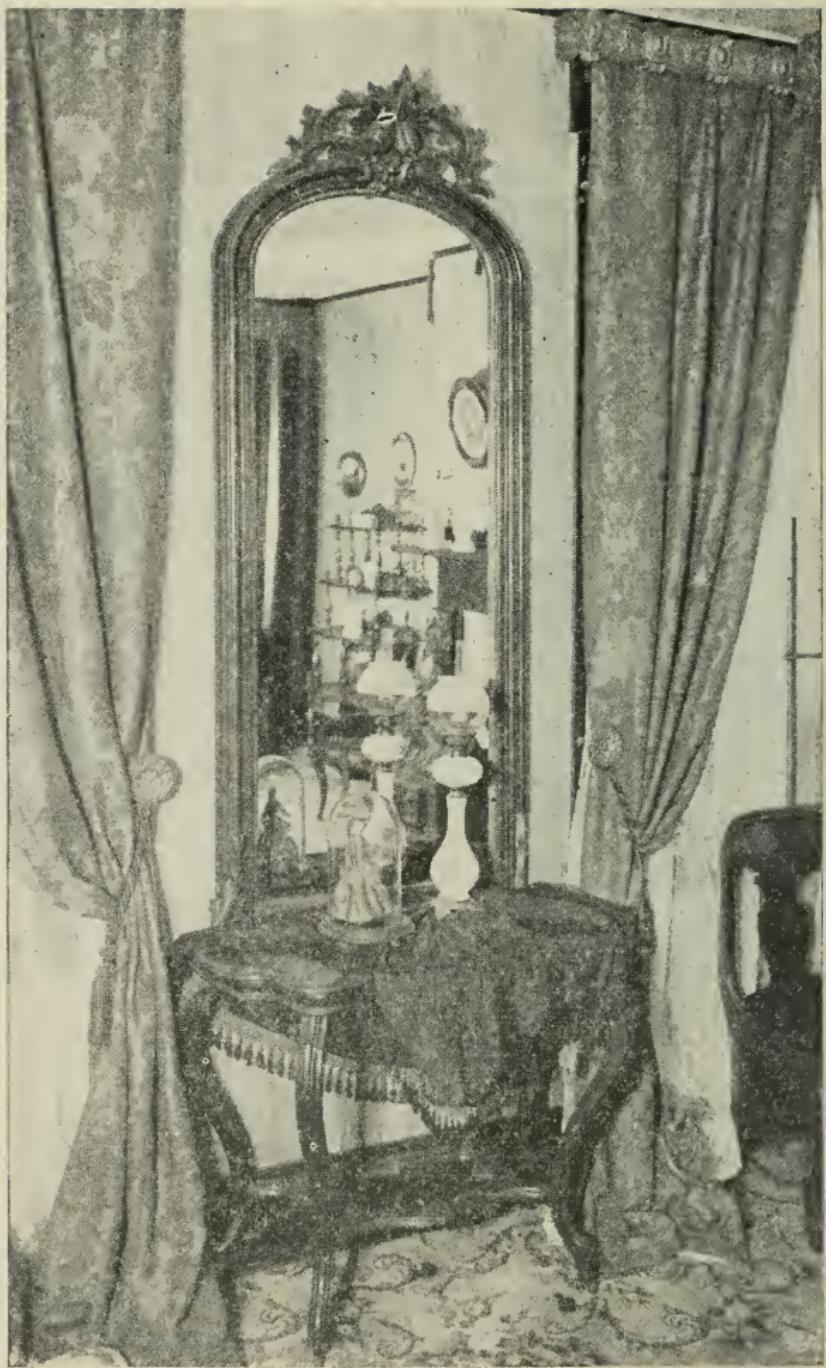
1, 1850. William Wallace Lincoln was born there December 21, 1850. Thomas (Tad) Lincoln was born there April 4, 1853.

The Lincolns were hospitable and frequently shared their comfortable home with friends at dinners and other affairs. The first of these was given shortly after they purchased the home and the last was a public reception arranged for the evening of February 6, 1861. Thousands of friends and visitors thronged the homestead that night to shake the hand of President-elect Lincoln and the first lady of the land. It was a farewell party as five days later they left for Washington.

Mr. Lincoln rarely used his home for business purposes preferring to see visitors at his office. However, it was in the parlors of this homestead that he received the committee delegated by the Republican National Committee on May 18th, 1860, to notify him of his nomination for President.

The Lincolns lived in the homestead continuously from May 2, 1844, until February 6, 1861, with the exception of seventeen months he was in Congress. Before taking his seat in Washington, Mr. Lincoln leased the homestead to Cornelius Ludlum for the period of one year at a rental of \$90.00 payable in quarterly installments. The lease was signed October 23, 1847 and Mr. Lincoln reserved a room upstairs to store some of his furniture.

While in Washington friends often heard President Lincoln speak of his homestead in Springfield and of his wish to return there at



FRONT PARLOR

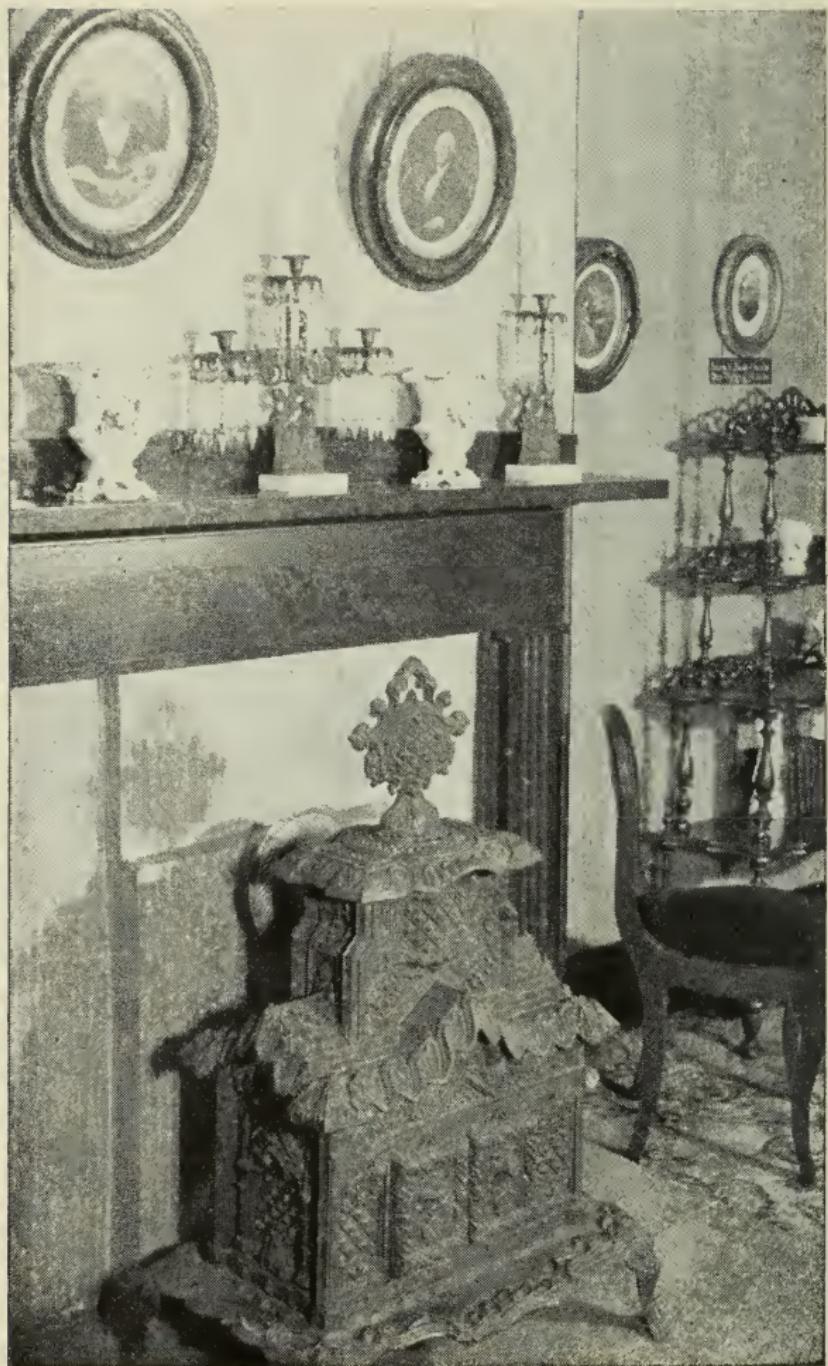
—Photo copyright, Herbert Georg Studio

the end of his term in office to live the remainder of his life among old friends and familiar scenes. During a trip upon the Potomac after the war the President was quoted as saying, "Springfield, how happy four years hence, will I be to return there in peace and tranquility."

Little is known regarding the construction of the original building other than the fact that Rev. Dresser purchased the lot from Dr. Gershom Jayne on April 23, 1839. It is understood the house was built the same year and was a story and a half in design. It was located on the outskirts of the city and in the meantime the city has grown around the homestead until now it is almost in the heart of the community.

The building is a plain old-fashioned structure and contains ten rooms. The frame work and all the floors are of oak, the lath of hickory and were split out by hand, the doors, door frames, window frames and weather boarding are of black walnut. The original nails used were handmade and sparingly used, wooden pegs being employed wherever practicable. A notable feature of its construction from the builder's point of view was the prodigal use of solid walnut.

The lot on which the house stands is fifty feet wide and one hundred and fifty-two feet long. It is elevated three to four feet above the grade of the street and a brick retaining wall runs the entire length of the west end and one-fourth the distance of the south side. It was constructed in 1850 and was built up



WOOD STOVE

—Photo copyright, Herbert Georg Studio

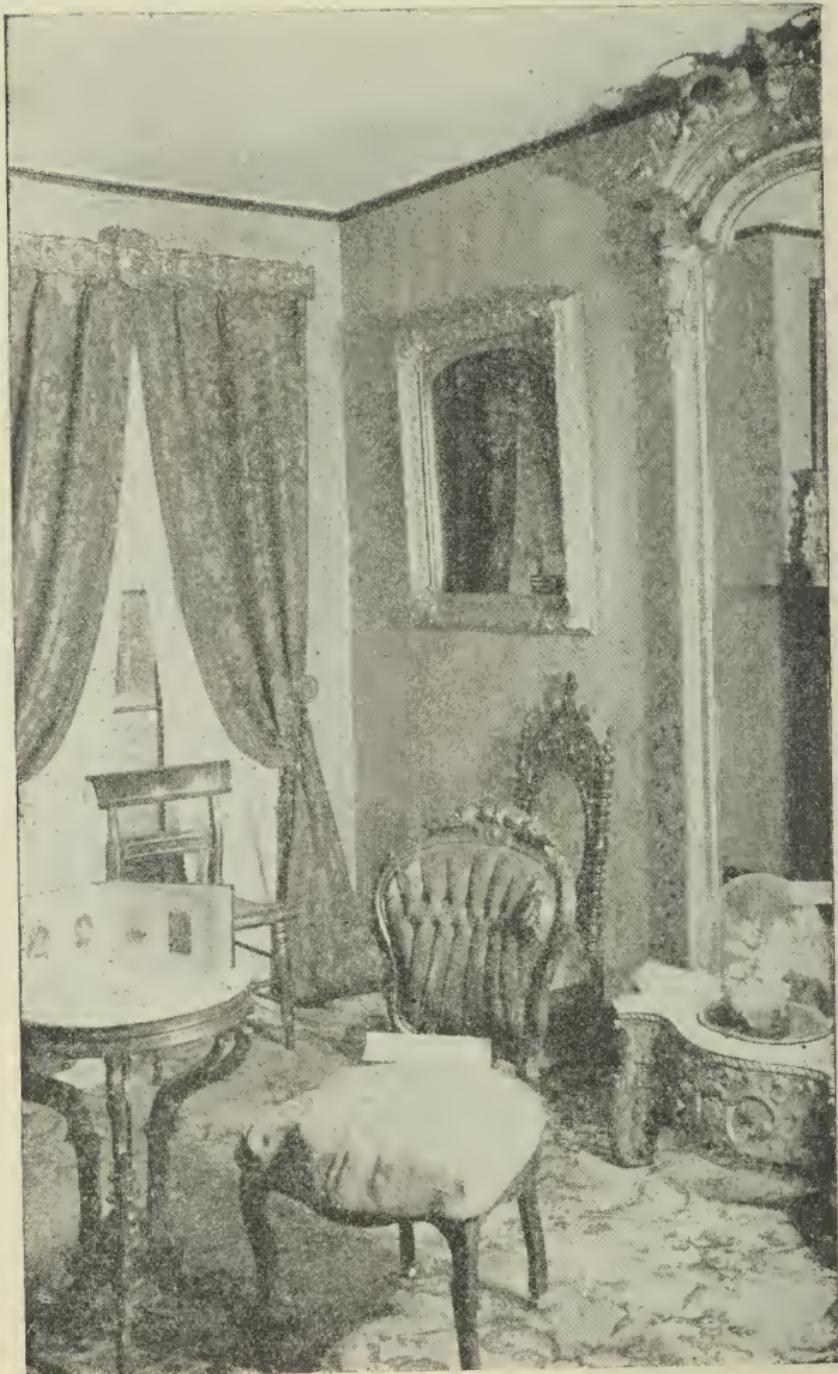
vertically from the inner side of the sidewalk to hold the earth in place on the part of the lot occupied by the house.

Logan Hay has in his possession a letter from A. Lincoln to N. Hay ordering the brick with which to erect the retaining wall along the Eighth street front of the property. The letter bears the date of June 11th, 1850.

A wood picket fence is constructed on top of the brick wall and a high board fence connects with the brick wall on the south side of the lot and cuts off the view of the back yard.

Several years prior to 1856 Lincoln and his wife talked of remodeling the cottage and raising it to two full stories. A contractor made sketches of the improvements and furnished them with an estimate of the cost. It is said Mr. Lincoln believed the charge excessive so the matter was dropped. However, at a later date and during one of Mr. Lincoln's circuit trips, Mrs. Lincoln figured with the firm of Hannon and Ragsdale, whose bid was \$1,300.00. Mrs. Lincoln ordered the improvements. When Mr. Lincoln returned from the trip he was astonished at the appearance of the building and smilingly asked neighbors if they knew where Abraham Lincoln lived?

No change has been made in the house since that time except repairs necessary because of decay of original materials and the construction of a small annex in the rear of the building. The homestead has been carefully preserved and it scarcely betrays the fact it is nearly a century old. It appears



BACK PARLOR

—Photo copyright, Herbert Georg Studio

much the same today as it did during the Lincoln family occupancy.

Several years ago the Department of Public Works and Buildings studied the construction of the home and made elaborate sketches with particular attention to detail. Every brick, piece of wood and other material was measured and designated on the plans so that duplicates could be inserted in any reconstruction that might be necessary. Of the first floor plan the double parlor measures 34x15 feet, sitting room, 19x15 feet, the dining room, 11x15 feet, the kitchen, 11x15 feet. On the second floor plan Mr. Lincoln's bedroom is 19x15 feet, Mrs. Lincoln's room, 15x15 feet, the guest room, 19x15 feet and Master Robert's room, 15x15 feet. The plans are stored in fire-proof vaults of the state house.

In 1923 fifty feet of ground was purchased from Israel Irwin and the building razed to eliminate fire hazard. The running of electrical wires in conduit and the heating of the house by city heat were further steps to avoid danger of destruction.

Several days before he departed for Washington in 1861, Lincoln had the homestead insured against loss or damage by fire. The policy was with the Hartford Fire Insurance Company and was for \$3,200.00. It covered the frame two-story dwelling house, frame carriage house, woodhouse and outbuildings.

After President Lincoln and his family moved to Washington various tenants occupied the homestead until 1887 when it became state property. The tenants were Lucian

Tilton, George H. Harlow, Dr. Gustav Wendlandt and Osborn H. Oldroyd. It is said that a John Packard lived there for several years and conducted a boarding house. The homestead was vacant at times also.

Prior to his removal to Washington Mr. Lincoln had a sale of furniture and Mr. Tilton purchased a number of pieces. Mr. Tilton took possession of the premises immediately and kept open house during the Civil War. It is estimated 65,000 persons visited the homestead of the President during that time. Mr. Tilton was President of the Great Western railroad and moved to Chicago in 1869 where most of the homestead furniture was destroyed in the great fire of 1871.

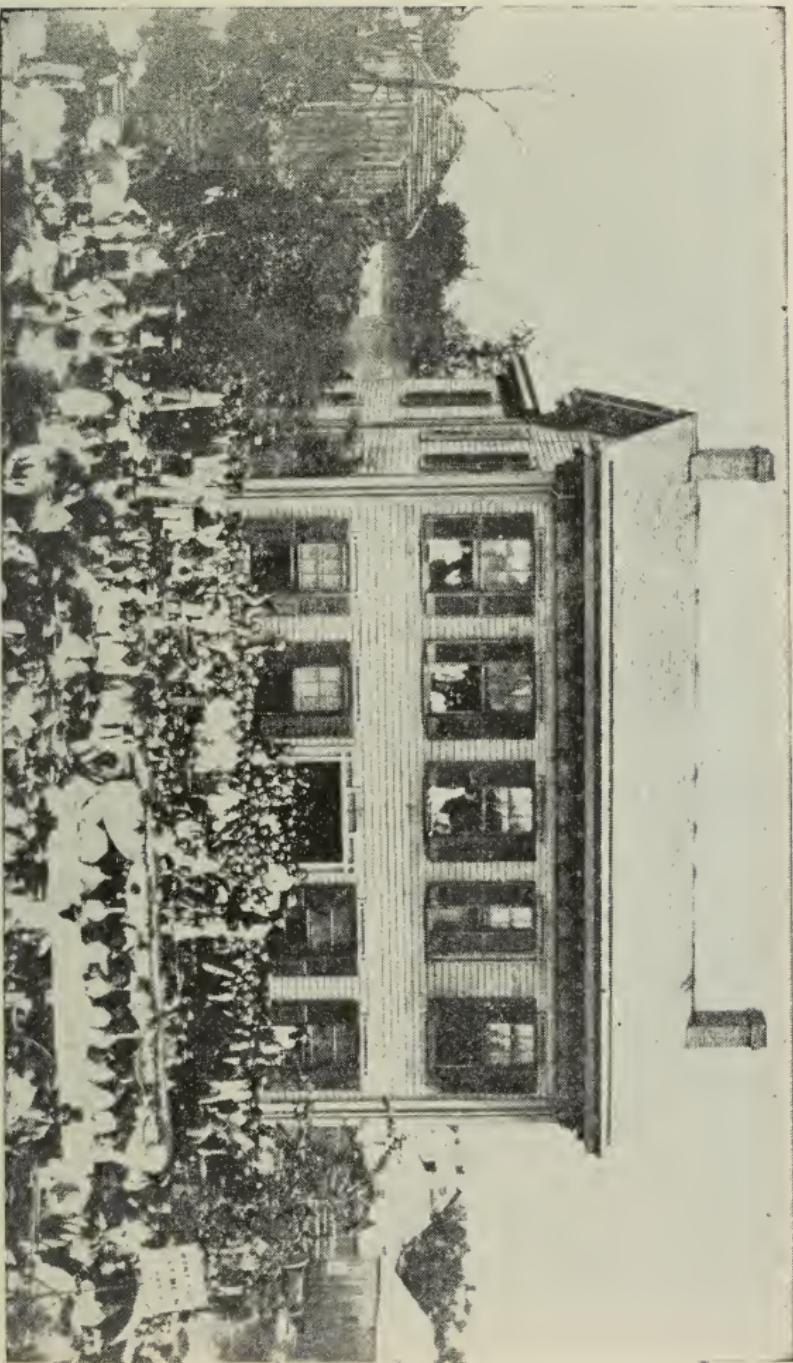
George H. Harlow occupied the homestead until 1880. He was from New York and one of the founders of the Union League and one-time mayor of Pekin. He was Inspector General of the State Guard and later Secretary of State, he was private secretary to Governor Oglesby, City Editor of the Illinois State Journal and a correspondent of metropolitan papers.

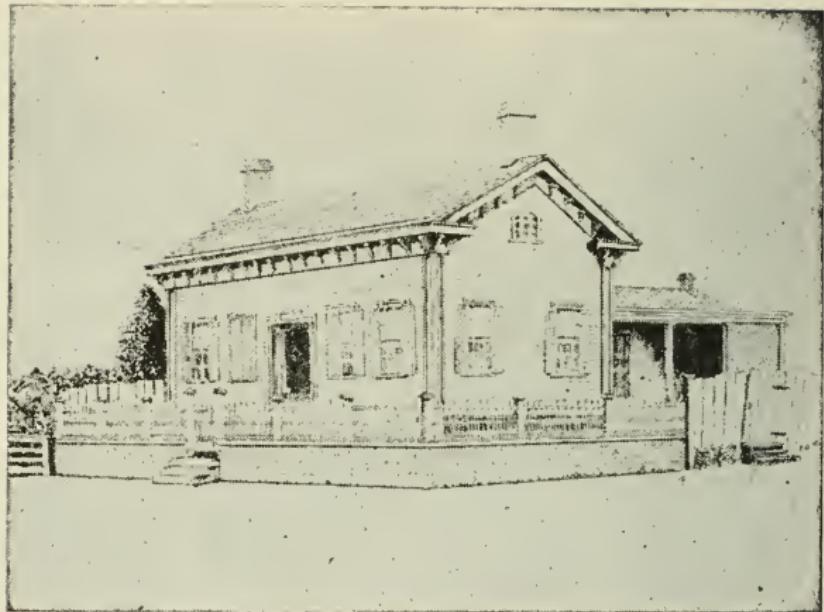
Dr. Gustav Wendlandt, a physician and later publisher of a German newspaper, lived in the homestead until 1883. He enjoyed a wide reputation as the Flying Dutchman because of the peculiar motion of his walk.

In 1883 Osborn H. Oldroyd rented the homestead and made it a museum for his collection of relics, curiosities and mementoes. It was considered one of the largest and most interesting in the nation. He began collecting

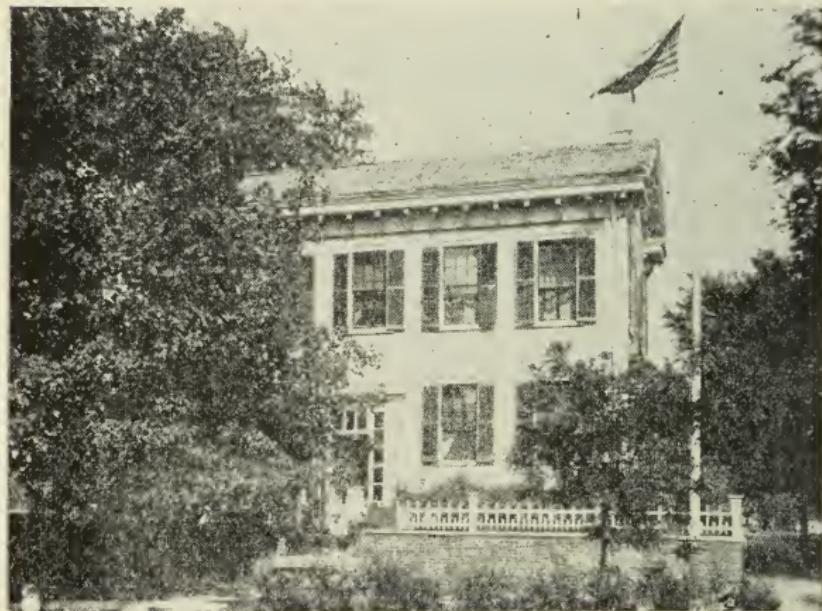
RAILSPLITTERS' PARADE FOR LINCOLN, 1860

—From Collection of Herbert Wells Fay





LINCOLN HOME IN 1850 PRIOR TO EXTENSIVE IMPROVEMENTS  
—From Collection of Herbert Wells Fay



A SUMMER SCENE OF LINCOLN HOME, 1925  
—From Collection of Herbert Georg



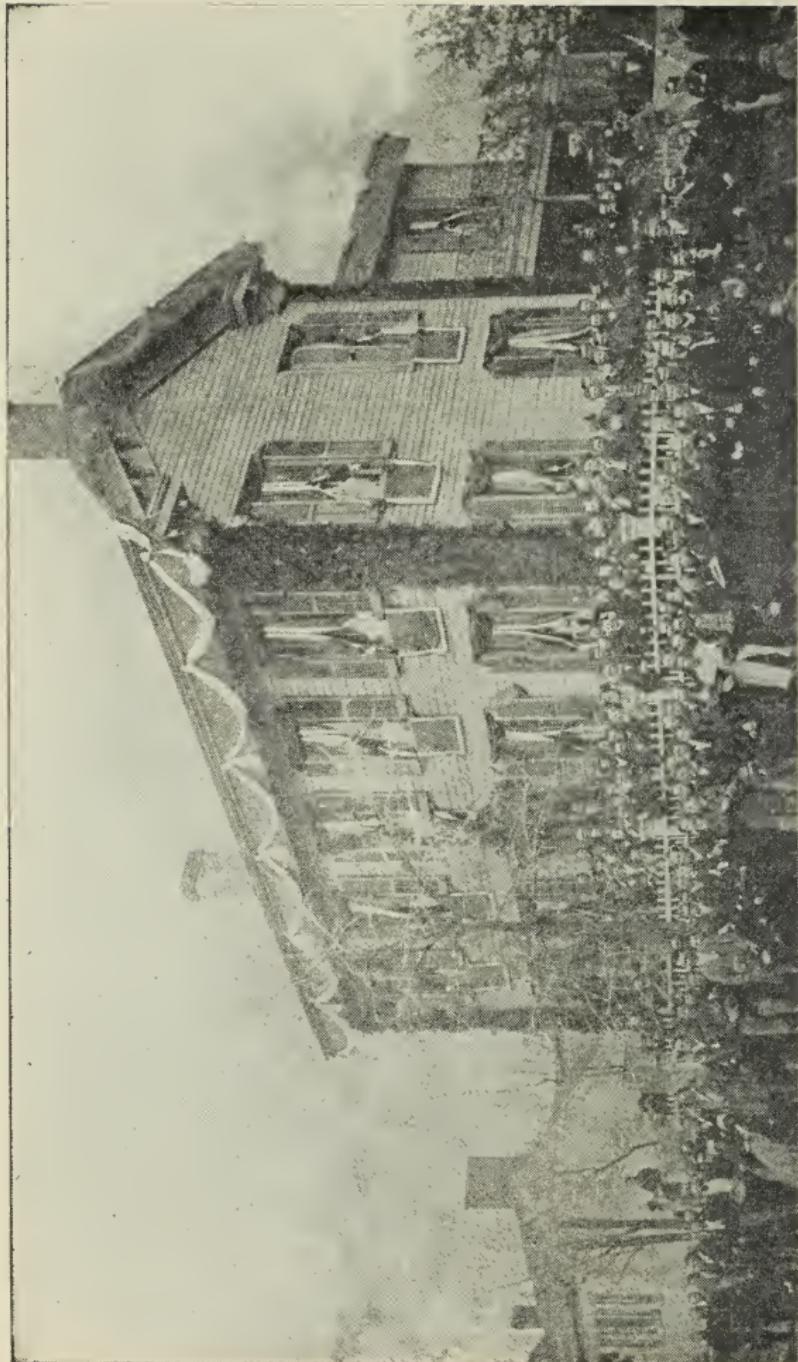
LINCOLN HOME IN 1888 AT TIME ROBERT LINCOLN DEEDED  
PROPERTY TO STATE —From Collection of Herbert Wells Fay



A WINTER SCENE OF LINCOLN HOME, 1924  
—From Collection of Frank Darnelle

—From Collection of Herbert Wells Fay

HOME LARIED IN MOURNING, MAY 4, 1865



in 1860.

The Oldroyd collection remained in the homestead for ten years when it was removed to Washington and displayed in the house where Abraham Lincoln died. In 1926 the collection was purchased by the United States Government at a price of \$50,000.

In the Oldroyd collection are thirteen pieces of furniture, a walnut cradle, a cook stove, fifteen books, the Lincoln family Bible, his famous shawl and a number of badges, flags and letters that were part of the contents of the homestead during Mr. Lincoln's residence.

Mr. Oldroyd was a veteran of the Civil War and a former steward of the National Soldiers' Home at Dayton, Ohio. He was a manufacturer of wooden ware and later operated a book and news business. He was ever on the search for relics and mementoes of Abraham Lincoln.

In the latter part of 1883 a movement was started to purchase the homestead as a permanent museum for the Oldroyd collection and Ex-Governor Richard J. Oglesby corresponded with Robert T. Lincoln regarding the matter but due to some reason or other it was not until 1887 that anything was done.

The Thirty-fifth General Assembly in session on June 15, 1887, passed an Act creating the Lincoln Homestead Trustees. The Trustees consisted of the Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor, Treasurer and Superintendent of Public Instruction. Richard J. Oglesby was Governor at the time and became chair-

man of the board of trustees.

The act became effective on July 1, 1887, and empowered the trustees to receive from Robert T. Lincoln a deed to the homestead at Eighth and Jackson streets and to hold the same perpetually, and in trust for the people of the State of Illinois, and to further execute and deliver to Robert T. Lincoln a contract covenanting with him and his heirs that said homestead shall be forever kept in good repair and free of access to the public. The trustees were charged with the proper preservation of the property.

The deed was signed July 8, 1887, by Robert T. Lincoln and Mary H. Lincoln and recorded on July 29, 1887. The legal description of the property was lot eight (8) and the south quarter of lot seven (7) in block ten (10) of Elijah Iles addition to Springfield.

The first official meeting of the homestead trustees was held on August 12, 1887, and one of their first orders was to insure the building for \$2,500.00. At their second meeting on August 29, they appointed Osborn H. Oldroyd custodian.

Several years later it was suggested that the stars and stripes should float above the homestead on all public occasions. Comrade William H. Sammons proffered a strong pole that measured seventy-two feet and Attorney George A. Sanders presented a large flag sixteen feet in length with forty-two stars.

The ceremony of raising the stars and stripes was conducted on the afternoon of October 16, 1889, during the 15th annual re-

union of the Illinois Association of Ex-Prisoners of War. All local posts of the Grand Army of the Republic and Sons of Veterans joined the Ex-Prisoners for the ceremony.

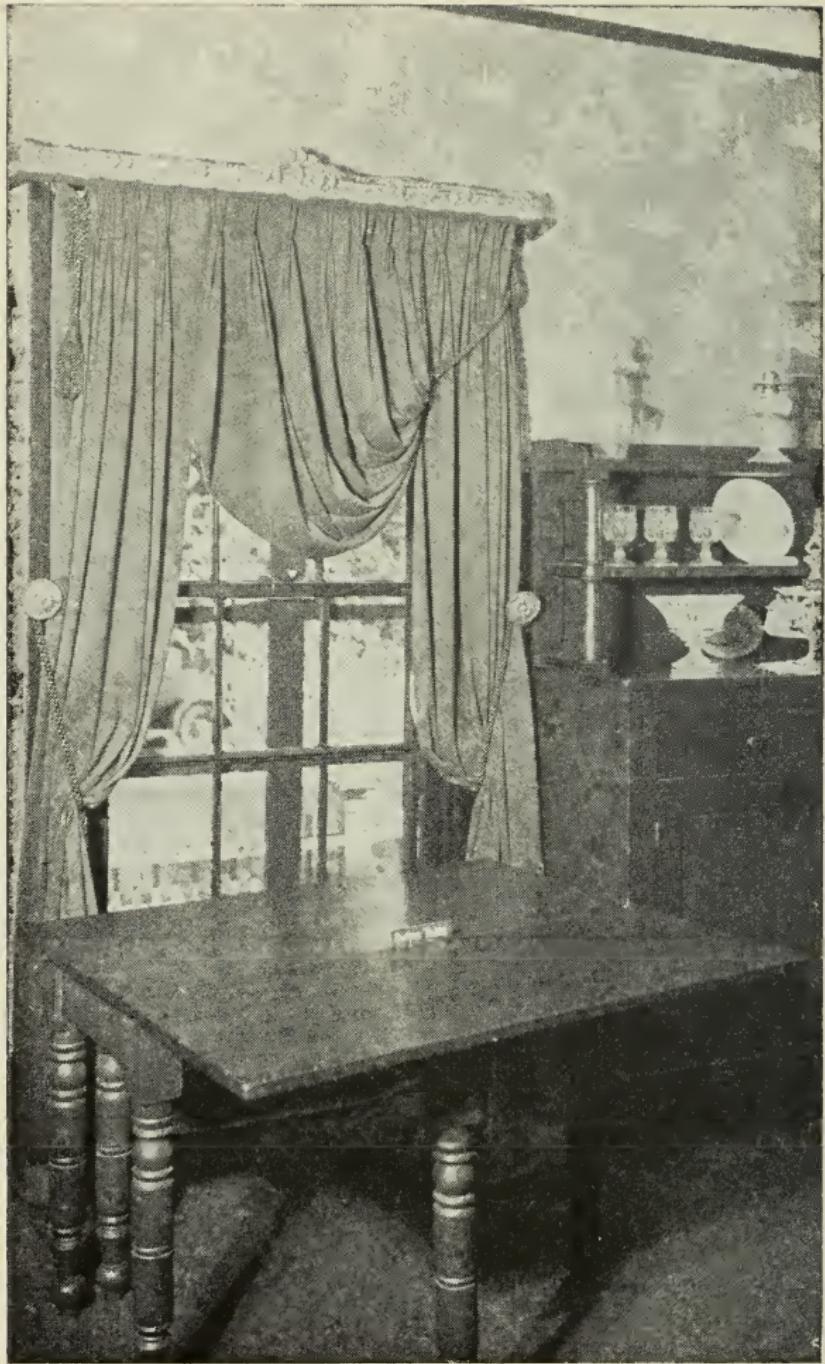
The presentation speech was made by Mr. Sanders and the acceptance by Governor Joseph W. Fifer on behalf of the trustees. Miss Daisy Oldroyd and Miss Effie Sanders drew the flag slowly to the head of the staff while the band played the Star Spangled Banner.

In 1893 Governor John P. Altgeld appointed Herman Hofferkamp custodian. Mr. Hofferkamp was a former coroner and city prison keeper. He was a veteran of the war and had retired from the livery business.

In July, 1897, Governor John R. Tanner appointed Albert S. Edwards custodian of the homestead. Mr. Edwards was a son of Ninian W. Edwards, and a grandson of Governor Ninian Edwards, and a nephew of Mary Todd Lincoln. He served for eighteen years and died in the home on December 20, 1915. His widow Josephine E. Edwards succeeded him and served until her death on October 8, 1918. A daughter, Mrs. Mary Edwards Brown, was appointed her successor and served until June, 1924.

The Lincoln Homestead Trustees functioned until July 1, 1917, when the Lowden Administrative Code went into effect abolishing the trustee management of the home and transferring the operation to the State Department of Public Works and Buildings.

The present custodian Miss Virginia Stuart Brown was appointed in July 1924.



DINING ROOM

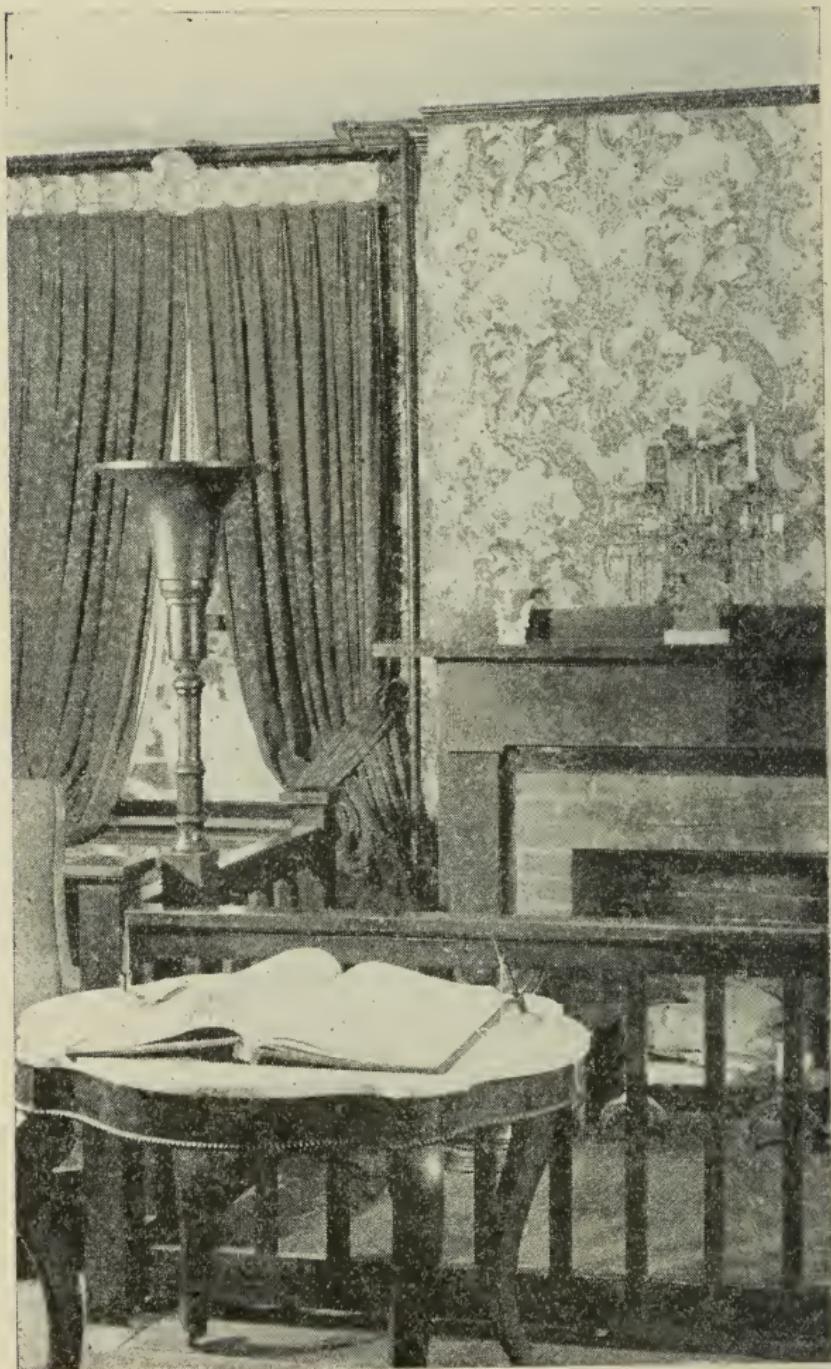
—Photo copyright, Herbert Georg Studio

She is a great grand-daughter of Major John T. Stuart who was Abraham Lincoln's first law partner in Springfield. Because of this and other family ties her interest was personal and it was due to her efforts that duplication of the wallpaper and decorations of the Lincoln period was made. She has been active in re-furnishing the interior with numerous other items of that period. The present arrangement of the rooms were taken from sketches printed in Frank Leslie's illustrated newspaper of 1861.

Entrance to the homestead is in the center of the building on the west side. Coral colored bricks eight inches square cover the sidewalk space between wall and street. A metal plaque is found on each side of the entrance. The one on the right reads, "Abraham Lincoln's Home, 1844-1861." The one on the left carries a quotation from Vachel Lindsay's "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight:" "By his homestead or in shadowed yards he lingers where his children used to play; or thru the market on the well worn stones he stalks until the dawn stars burn away." This tablet erected September 19, 1932 by the Illinois Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic.

A flight of five steps built up from the sidewalk leads to the level of the lot. Three additional steps reach the porch floor and entrance is gained through the old walnut door. A replica of the original name plate "A. Lincoln" is attached to the door.

The rooms which are open to the public



LIVING ROOM

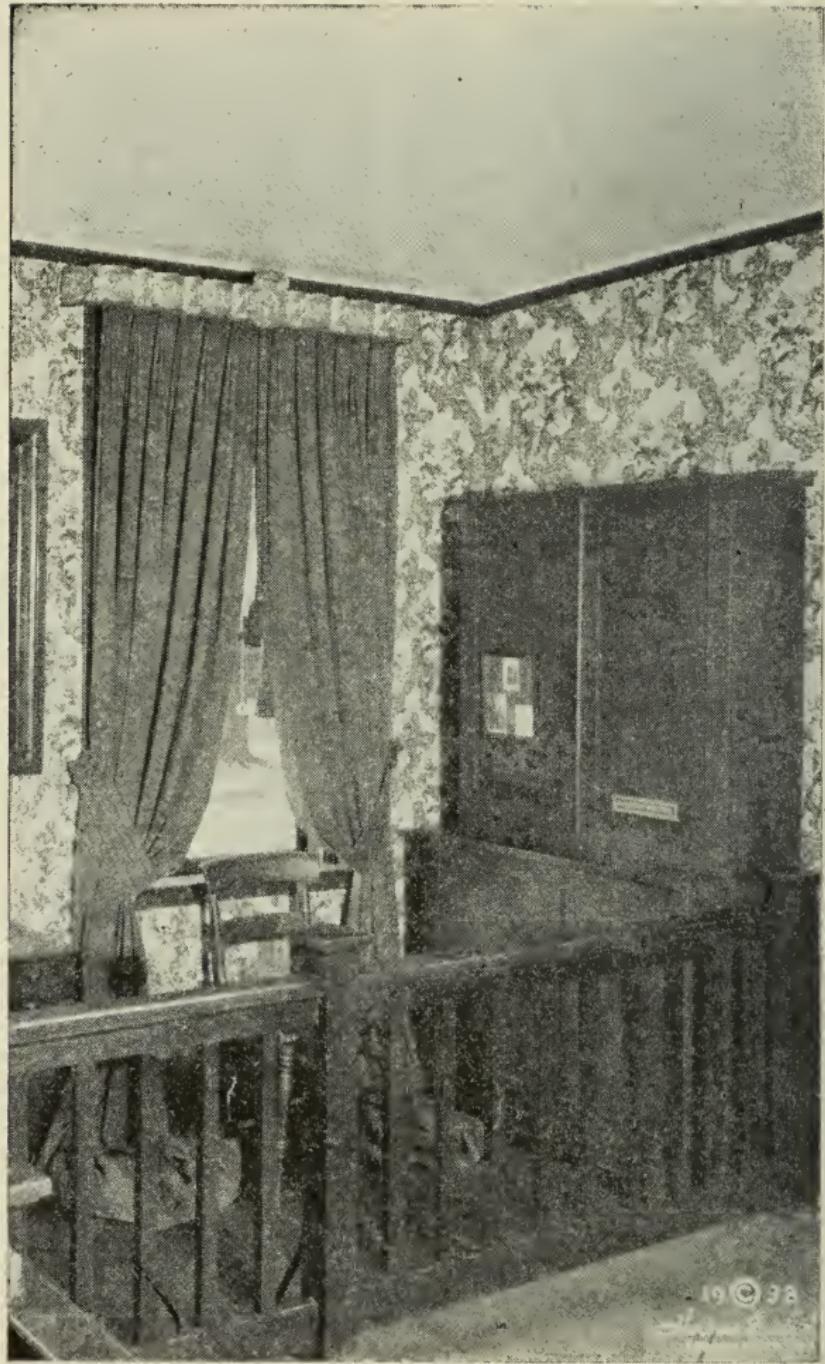
—Photo copyright, Herbert Georg Studio

are the front and rear parlors, the family sitting room and the dining room. Entering the home the visitor finds the two parlors on the left of the front hall. The living room is on the right with the dining room back of it. The latter is more nearly furnished with Mr. Lincoln's own belongings than any of the others. The dining room table and chest of drawers were a part of the original furnishings.

The present staircase is in all probability a part of the original house. A hallway extends from the front door to the rear. The homestead was originally warmed by fireplaces, but Mr. Lincoln did not like fireplaces so he had the openings closed and installed wood stoves. It is understood there was a wood stove in every room. During his long residence in this house Mr. Lincoln cut his wood, milked his cow, took care of his horse and other chores.

The upstairs rooms are occupied by the custodian. In Mr. Lincoln's day they were used as follows: The front room on the north side was Mr. Lincoln's bedroom, the second room on that side was Mrs. Lincoln's and the younger boys. The back room on the north side was the maids. The front room on the south side was the guest room, the second room was Robert's quarters. The present bathroom was used as a trunk room.

The brick of the fireplace in the south front room on the first floor are the originals. The flooring of this room are the original handmade boards. Gas light was installed in



CUPBOARD

—Photo copyright, Herbert Georg Studio

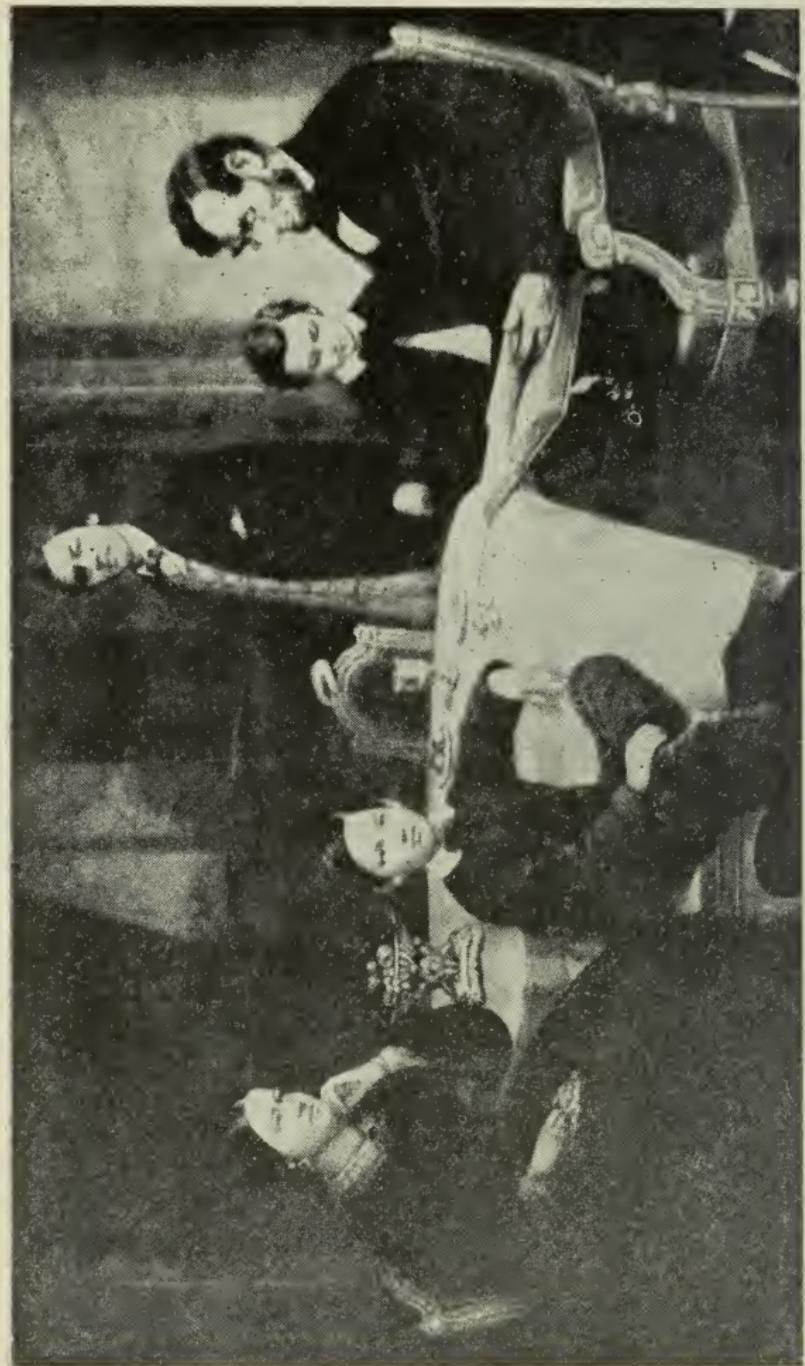
the homestead in the '80's and electric light later when it came into general use. The basement floor was concreted some years ago.

The original parlor set and music box which was owned by the Lincolns is now in possession of Mrs. Mary B. Patterson, a grand-daughter of Mary Lincoln's sister, Mrs. William S. Wallace.

On May 7th, 1929, a bill was introduced in the General Assembly regarding the care and custody of the Lincoln Homestead. The act was approved June 17th, 1929, and afterwards certain members of the Abraham Lincoln Association offered to loan the home furniture and furnishings of Lincoln's day. Most of the furniture that adorns the rooms came from the homes of pioneer families of Springfield who knew the Lincoln's personally.

From the collection of Logan Hay there is a shaving case of black walnut that belonged to Mr. Lincoln, a glass pickle dish and two shells that belonged to Mrs. Lincoln and a decanter that belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln. One candelabra with crystals was loaned by Mrs. Hay.

The red brocade hangings for four windows with curtain fixtures were loaned by the family of O. M. Hatch, Secretary of State when Lincoln lived here. A square mirror in mahogany frame and a sofa of cherry, upholstered in horsehair, formerly owned by Ninian Edwards were loaned by Mrs. Paschal E. Hatch.



ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND HIS FAMILY, 1861

—From Collection of Herbert Wells Fay

Certain articles of furniture that belonged to Mrs. Lincoln from the collection of Mrs. A. L. Ide, attested by affidavit, namely, one small walnut rocker, cane-seated; one walnut chest of drawers, one walnut drop-leaf dining room table, one cane-seated dining room chair and one china plate have been restored to the homestead. Other items from this collection are a tall Seth Thomas clock, mirror in walnut frame, Dresden china lamp, a picture of the Lincoln family, a pair of black andirons, one flower design encased in box, marble-top table of black walnut, feather flowers in case, nine plain goblets and five figured goblets, a glass cake dish, several sofas and a number of chairs of the Lincoln period.

A large walnut rocker, upholstered in green mohair, which was called Mr. Lincoln's favorite chair when he visited the Pickeral family was loaned by George Pasfield's grandson.

A mahogany whatnot, two cases of green French china with painted figures, pictures of George and Martha Washington and Torgerson's "Night" and "Morning" are from the collection of the Stuart Brown family.

An album of family pictures of Lincoln's relatives, a white and gold china dish and custard set which belonged to Mrs. John T. Stuart, a funeral badge worn by Major Stuart at Mr. Lincoln's funeral, two cathedral chairs that belonged to Ninian Edwards, one small oil painting, one bedroom set of carved walnut furniture, consisting of bed, bureau and washstand, now in Lincoln's bedroom at the

homestead were loaned by Mrs. F. P. Ide.

Articles of furniture that belonged to the grandfather of William J. Butler and were in the Butler home at the time Mr. Lincoln boarded there and now in the Lincoln homestead include two plated silver candlesticks, one small clock, one upholstered plush ottoman, two oil paintings, portraits of Mr. and Mrs. William J. Butler, one walnut sewing table, one card table, inlaid in mother-of-pearl, one walnut sideboard, one white and gold china fruit dish, one pin cushion and mat-Indian bead work.

Articles which belong to Virginia Stuart Brown which were the property of John T. Stuart are now in the homestead. Two engravings with gold frames, a barnyard and a stable scene, one steel engraving, a domestic scene, a large arm chair, upholstered in horse-hair; one mahogany wall table and one marble statue of woman "Evangeline."

A wool-worked sofa cushion loaned by Mrs. Nelly Bergen, two etchings of Mr. Lincoln by Otto Schneider, artist, given by Mr. Schneider; an engraving of Mr. Lincoln and a piece of dress worn by Laura Keene, actress, on the night Lincoln was assassinated, in a frame, loaned by Mrs. Lydia Gray Mason; a rosewood chair with original covering that belonged to Ninian Edwards and loaned by E. W. Brainerd. A rush-seated chair that was in the law office of Logan and Lincoln, loaned by Mrs. Hugh T. Morrison. A piece of table cloth used at Lincoln's wedding in picture frame, was loaned by Susan Merritt

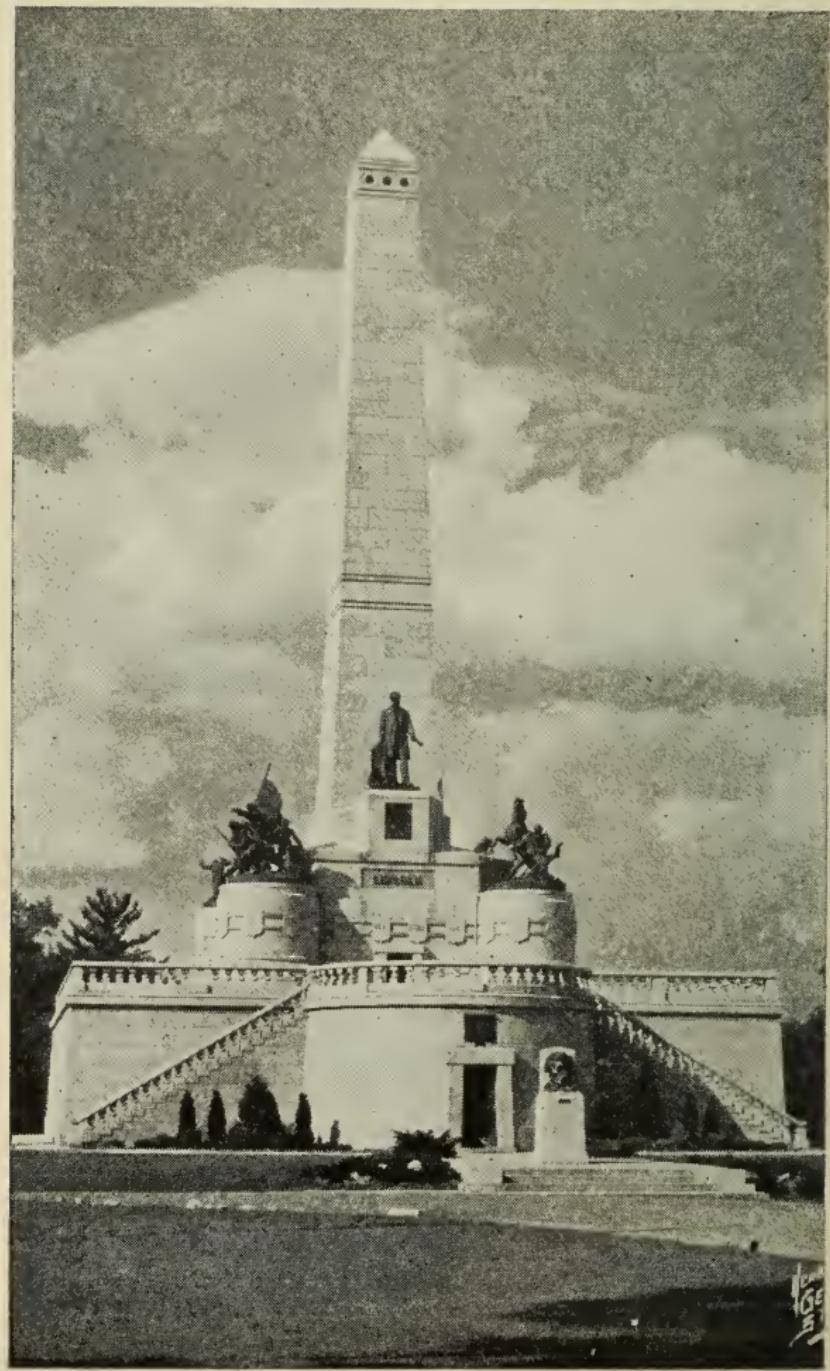
## Loring.

On December 8, 1909, a number of young men from various sections of the state gathered at the homestead for the purpose of founding the Lincoln League of Illinois. They came to this historic shrine to reverence the memory of Abraham Lincoln and pledged themselves to perpetuate the ideals for which he stood.

On October 19, 1923, Hon. Lloyd George addressing an assembly in Springfield said: "Much as I wanted to see your great land, there was one spot above all others I was anxious to see, and that was the home of Abraham Lincoln. . . . It is difficult for me to express the feelings with which I visited the home and the last resting place of one of the noblest figures in the history of mankind."

Seventy odd years have dawned and disappeared into the dusk of forgotten things since the remains of Abraham Lincoln were returned to Springfield for burial. During that march of time a million and more persons from all parts of the globe have crossed the threshold of this simple homestead to pay homage to the great soul that once lived there.

Today—the historic homestead stands as a symbol of freedom and men and women and children from near and far invade the sacred precincts of the Inspiring City to glimpse the grandeur of the stately white shrine with its green shutters.



LINCOLN NATIONAL TOMB











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HISTORY OF THE LINCOLN HOMESTEAD SPRING



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